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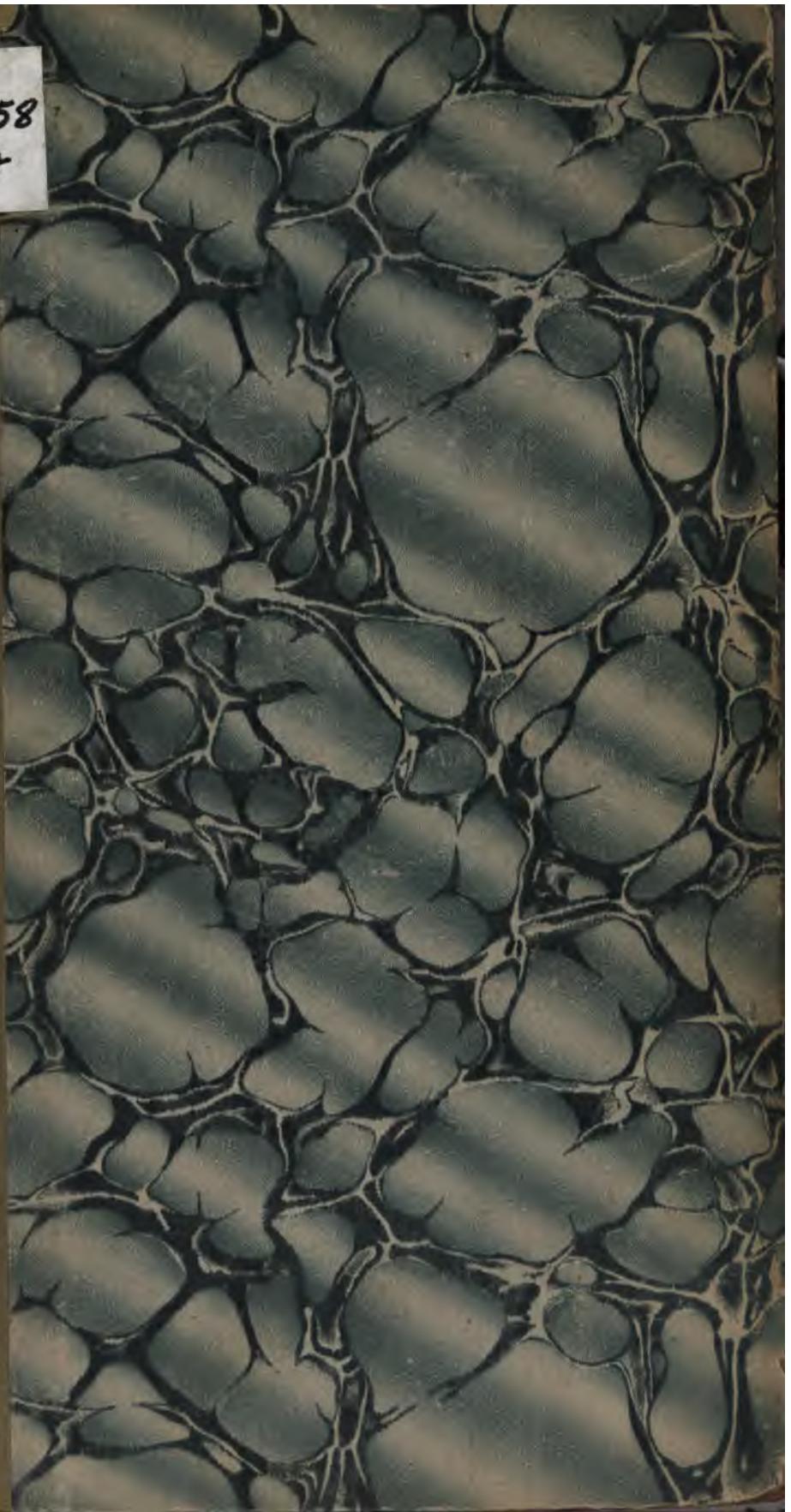
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REV. E. H. CHAPIN'S

ANNUAL ELECTION SERMON



The Relation of the Individual to the Republic.

A

S E R M O N

DELIVERED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY MARCUS MORTON,

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR HENRY H. CHILDS,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND

THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

AT

THE ANNUAL ELECTION,

ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1844.

BY E. H. CHAPIN,

Pastor of the Universalist Church in Charlestown.

Boston:

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JAN. 4, 1844.

ORDERED, That Messrs. *FROTHINGHAM*, of *Charlestown*,
GIBBENS, of *Boston*, and
LATHROP, of *Hawley*,

be a Committee to present the thanks of the House to the Rev. *EDWIN H. CHAPIN*, for the Discourse delivered by him, yesterday, before the Government of the Commonwealth, and to request a copy thereof for publication : and

ORDERED, That the same Committee cause the usual number of copies of such Discourse to be printed.

CHARLES W. STOREY, Jr., Clerk.

S E R M O N.

I Corinthians, xii. 26.

AND WHETHER ONE MEMBER SUFFER, ALL THE MEMBERS SUFFER WITH IT ; OR ONE MEMBER BE HONORED, ALL THE MEMBERS REJOICE WITH IT.

I TRUST that our assembling here to-day is not a mere form ; but that devoutly recognizing the reason for which our fathers instituted this service, we cherish not only their custom but their sentiment. Next to the abolition of all religious ordinances, there is nothing so ominous as a hollow and weary observance of them. Nay, this is even worse than violent irreligion, for that is too unnatural to last long, and its terrible earnestness will produce reaction. Rather no observance than a heartless one ! If we feel that there is no efficacy in it, then for us it has no propriety.

But I will believe that you sympathize with this occasion. Under a deep sense of that individual responsibility which clings to us in every department

of action, you have come up to this sacred place, worn by the footsteps of many generations, and hallowed by the prayers of those who have long since mouldered into dust, to invoke the wisdom that alone can guide through the perilous mazes of public life, and, in these calmer moments, to ponder some truth that may control the zeal of political excitement.

I alluded, just now, to the sense of individual responsibility that presses upon us in all our conduct. *The importance of the individual in the republic, and the mutual obligations which rest upon him and upon the State,* form the essential ideas of the discourse to which I now invite your attention. The words of the text were applied by the apostle Paul to the christian church ; but they are applicable to every Commonwealth, and should be written in letters of light upon all its institutions. They suggest the oneness and the common weal of the body politic, and yet maintain, for each of its members, a distinct and prominent individualism. They give a peculiar significance to the grand truth, that the aggregate which forms the State is made up of UNITS, each containing a moral force, each comprising the law of duty, the light of reason, and the power of will. They declare the relation of all to each, of each to all.

There is a tendency in our day to move in masses,

to rely upon numerical strength, to triumph by associated action. But there is danger, lest in the consideration of concrete results we forget those single sources from which they issue. There is danger, lest we neglect to ask what is the ultimate object of this combination,—does it render back to each individual that additional good which is to be expected from it? And these are considerations for the republic. It is not a separate interest. It has no distinct life of itself. Its pulses throb in the streets, the marts, the homes of the land,—wherever there is moral personality,—wherever there is human responsibility,—wherever there is a man. When private virtue is hazarded upon the perilous cast of expediency,—when the transactions between you and me are vile, when the foundations of principle have rotted away in the individual heart, then the pillars of the republic, however apparent their stability, are infected with decay at the very centre. But if each spirit is informed by truth and loyal to conscience, then the Commonwealth has unfailing resources, from which, through all external defeats, through all internal reverses, it imbibes perpetuity and power.

But the indissoluble connection between the republic and the individual, presents itself in a two-fold aspect. Not only is every man solemnly obli-

gated to the State, but the converse of this is also true.

From the physical welfare of its citizens the State derives its economical prosperity, and, therefore, as a dictate of the most obvious selfishness, it is bound to diffuse a healthful vigor through those spheres of personal enterprise that revolve within its ample circle, each maintaining a private interest, yet conflicting with none, and connected to the great commonwealth by vital ligaments which run through all. But as the physical prosperity of a State is not its highest condition, so the whole welfare of its members is not comprehended in this ; and their *whole welfare*, so far as is practicable, it is bound to secure. And, passing by other interests, permit me to dwell upon *the obligation that rests upon the State to assist the moral development of its citizens*. Nobly was it said here, upon an occasion like the present, that “ the individual is not made for the State, but the State for the individual ; ” and it performs an inefficient service, indeed, if it fails to secure his moral good. Although it is but the aggregate of individual minds, it does and it must react upon those minds for good or for evil. Something else is derived from it besides protection, or those advantages that nourish our physical interests. An influence emanates

from men associated that can never be experienced by man isolated ; and this influence retards or advances the moral progress of the individual. It is true that “ that is the best government which interferes least with private actions and opinions.” I would not attribute even a paternal authority to the State, for that might be perverted into an argument for the most flagrant despotism. With the opinions, the interests, the private conduct of individuals, if we confine its functions to the enactment of compulsory or restrictive laws, it has no right to interfere, when these do not encroach upon the public good. All human power is dangerous, and should be as limited as is consistent with the well-being of each and of all. Yet, without interfering with a single private right, without assuming any censorship over private opinions, or unlawfully restraining private conduct, a moral influence may breathe out from every institution and be embodied in every law, that shall infuse life and purity and power into individual souls. If magistrates are corrupt ; if legislation is made a mere party-test ; if the general welfare is sacrificed to selfish greeds and passions, and the maxims of a liberal patriotism are disregarded in the strife of party issues, will this have no effect upon personal character ? If the body-politic

at large escapes venal corruption, will not the moral life of individuals be tainted? On the other hand, who can doubt the *moral* influence of that administration which, clothed with self-respect, is the organ not of faction but of justice; which elevates politics into a high public concern; whose laws purify as well as control, and appeal to conscience rather than force; and which plants thick and wide those institutions that act not as checks but as aids to the noblest liberty, and enshrine that eternal spirit of patriotism which cannot be entombed with the ashes of dead men, to do even a greater work in the future than it has accomplished in the past?

But, that I may not be accused of indefiniteness, let me specify one or two modes by which a State may affect the moral development of individuals, without encroaching upon private rights.

And first, *by cherishing the interests of education*. In no way can the wealth which has been rendered into the public treasury, be so appropriately distributed for each and for all, as by the establishment of public schools. In no way can the diversities of property be so lawfully and safely equalized, as by this method, which diverts the means of the wealthy, who have contributed much, to benefit the poor who can contribute but little, and places the children

of both upon the same platform, by giving to each a manly preparation for those advantages that are of true worth and honor. Through no channel will wealth go so far. In no form will a small investment produce so rich a dividend. If the wildest scheme of agrarianism could be realized, a periodical distribution of property, to the neglect of this general culture, would be a curse, not only choking the springs of enterprise and paralyzing the motives to industry, but leaving mind to become enervated, and morals to rot under its influence.

I know that in speaking thus I utter no new truth. But I wish to show that there are lawful and great ends for legislation, beyond those temporal interests which it is bound to secure. I wish to indicate one of the most practicable agents by which the State may develope the moral character of the individual. I devoutly thank God, that in Massachusetts the spirit which threw up free schools in the first clearings of the forest, continues to this day, planting those institutions side by side with our churches, and providing with careful vigilance and wise liberality for their efficient operation. Wherever New England influence is felt—and where is New England influence not felt?—they extend a blessing. Wherever that spirit of enterprise that characterizes

our people diffuses itself, there common schools contribute a better element to the colonization of our common country, than numerical strength, or physical wealth. And the citizen, to whose own fireside they bring indisputable benefit, must regard as a sacred immunity that system that educates his sons and daughters—that noble spirit of vigilance and culture, the richest gift that a republic can bestow—the omnipresent spirit of republicanism. His children are not taken from him, and disciplined to suit the private ends of government ; but are prepared for their own usefulness and advantage. Yet in this way also the State gains citizens, valuable and efficient not merely for what they do, but for what they are. In this way, without breaking its members into trained castes, without manual drilling in public camps, there is created a reserved force, fit for every emergency, and that will sustain the Commonwealth when all other resources become exhausted. But not alone from motives of local pride, or public interest, let us thank God for public schools ; but also because they furnish an opportunity for discharging those sacred obligations, which the State owes to each of its members—an opportunity that exists for the sake of the individual—an organ that advances his highest good, his moral welfare, and, through

the enlightened reason and the informed conscience, develops that *self-power* which makes him ever greater than his work—which not merely secures specific forms of success, but commands all its elements—which opens at will the sources of wealth and distinction, and controls every spring of outward good.

There is another method by which the State may secure the moral culture of the individual, without undue interference with any private right. And that is, *through its criminal legislation*. Society, as a general thing, is too prone to act upon the principle of retaliation. Men are sent to prison to pay for having done wrong—to serve so many years as an offset to so much crime, and then are turned loose to commit more crime, and to be shut up for another term of years. Nay, as has recently been seen, they break into the very prison from which they have just been liberated, and steal under the very walls that are erected to frown upon felony. The State has not finished its work, when it has merely inflicted pain, or loss, or restraint upon the criminal. The public safety is not sufficiently secured when this is all that is accomplished. Crime is not *destroyed* thereby—it is only checked, and that for a season. Its embers lie smouldering in that guilty breast,

ready to flame out again upon the least occasion. Without interfering with private rights, there is here a direct opportunity to exert a moral influence, by making the very punishment that so justly restrains the individual, also the means of his reformation. Let that moral influence be brought to bear directly upon the criminal. Let his punishment have relation not to *time*, but to *character*. Let him be held in durance not to fulfil a term of years, but for reformation. And when you endeavor to accomplish anything beyond mere *restraint*—when you seek to *reform* men—you can only secure your end by moral power, by which I mean not persuasion merely, but appeals to the conscience, the reason, the heart. Such appeals I call moral power, in contradistinction from the whip, the pillory, the gallows. “We can be subdued,” says Coleridge, “by that alone which is analogous in kind to that by which we subdue: therefore by the invisible powers of our nature, whose immediate presence is disclosed to our inner sense, and only as the symbols and language of which all shapes and modifications of matter become formidable to us.” By this reformatory discipline, then, which, while it abrogates no just retribution and relaxes no wholesome penalty, effects not merely the restraint but the removal of evil, a State may

have a direct influence upon the moral character of its members. Without it, but little is done by the mere punishment of crime. Depend upon it, where the disposition to do evil is left unquenched, you can frame no law, you can devise no penalty, you can build no prison, you can erect no gallows, that shall eradicate crime and wrong-doing. They will exist in spite of these.

But this will act in favor of the criminal also? Yes; and I hope, after what I have said, I shall not be accused of morbid sympathy with him, or of a lax consideration for the public welfare, when I say that penal laws should be for the guilty as well as the innocent; that the penalty should be adapted both to the good of society and his own, and that any punishment that defeats this end, although only so far as *he* is concerned, is not decreed in the best spirit of legislation. The criminal is a man! God knoweth a guilty and an abandoned one. We shudder at him, all scarred and bloody with sin. But still he is connected with us. He is a limb of us all. Some life from the common heart trickles down even to him; and surely his spiritual healing will be better for us than merely to chastise his flesh with stripes and cautery, while we leave that inward taint unremoved. He is a man! Our badges of

terrible distinction cannot conceal that fact. We cannot brand him so deep as to burn out his nature. We will rebuke him who has broken the sacred law of right. We will restrain him whose spirit is so fiercely evil. But if we act, in our legislation, from the dictates of true republicanism—nay, if we act from the spirit of Christianity, of which republicanism is a specific form—we will seek the reformation of that criminal. This is the great end of Christianity. It is not chiefly a legislative, or an executive, but a reformatory system. It seeks the improvement of the degraded. It visits the sick who need a physician. It assigns a worth to man as man. No matter how ignorant—no matter how debased ; it discovers enough in him to call down Christ from heaven—enough to cause angels to rejoice at his restoration. It never despairs of its object. Loftiest when it condescends the most ; grandest when its regenerating power has operated the most palpably, it comes to the low and the castaway, lays its hand upon them and says, “Rise up and walk !” It pierces the scum and the rottenness of society, the thick veils of ignorance, the meshes of sin, and seizing the hopefulness that glimmers even there, seeks to fan it into everlasting life. It breathes over dry bones that men have thrown aside and aban-

doned, until they move, quick and alive, and rise, regenerate, from their crumbling dust. And such is the true spirit of republican legislation.

Thus have I specified some of the direct agents by which a State may act for the moral welfare of its individual members, and not encroach, by an undue interference, upon that freedom of private action of which we are so properly jealous. And while I am aware that the welfare of the citizen is bound up in many interests, I have dwelt chiefly upon his moral welfare, because I deem it not only his deepest interest but the support of all others. Even if we confine the functions of a State to the securing of private rights, such as life and property, something is to be done besides the utterance of compulsory or restrictive laws. It is obvious that no law can be executed, much less obeyed, if the public sentiment should rise in opposition to it ; and although such a rebellion might be characterized by the worst features of anarchy, the radical evil would be the condition of individual minds tending thus to civil chaos. Moreover, the law itself, which secures the well disposed and restrains the evil minded, is but an expression of the great principle of right, and in proportion as occasions exist for its enactment, there is proof that this great principle is disre-

garded. The violation of that law reveals something far worse than the overt act. It shows us that in the spiritual nature of the offender there is disloyalty to *right*, the foundation of all law. It exposes a depth of evil that cannot be sounded by legal enactments, and can only be exhausted by moral means. Let it not for a moment be supposed that I sympathize with those impracticable schemes which demand the abolition of all physical restraints, and would endeavor to govern society by moral force alone. The work to which I allude is not destructive but constructive. I merely say, that if a State diffuses a moral influence through the sources of individual action, it creates a stronger security for the welfare of every man, than by merely enacting laws for his protection. In the present condition of society we must have physical restraints. But our confidence that these will be maintained, rests upon the fact that there is a general disposition to maintain them, and that the evil minds to which they are opposed are in the minority. Otherwise these securities would stand upon volcanic ground, beneath which roar the fervid elements of destruction.

But we are too prone to consider the State merely as a government, an armed police, a legal functionary that prescribes certain rules of action, regulates our

political economy, declares war or makes peace. This idea may suffice for old Europe, but if there is aught that distinguishes our doctrine of civil society from that which lies at the foundation of its feudal dynasties, it is this,—that the republic, the state, is a **BROTHERHOOD**, consolidated by the sacred interests and bound by the solemn obligations of that relationship. Let us remember this, lest in our antagonisms we war against that which cannot be alien to us,—lest, with the hands of faction, we tear at that common weal which is intertwined with the fibres of our own hearts. Our doctrine of political equality is rooted in this truth. Our political action should respect it. In any of those capacities in which we act for the State, or as the State, let us consider all the interests of each. Above all, let us not, in the very work of legislation, defeat those high ends which legislation should accomplish. Let us beware how self-will or party spirit influences our conduct, in our solemn and responsible office as agents for the common and for private weal. We cannot resist the fact, that we have a personal interest in the intellectual and moral good of all, that even the lowest and most vile has claims upon us, is a part of us ; and we should cherish his spiritual exaltation as our own welfare, warring with whatever hinders, cherishing

whatever aids this. After all, we cannot draw any division between the good of the individual and the good of the State. We cannot separate action from reaction in those influences that circulate through the body politic. One great interest sustains us all. We each contribute to a common nourishment. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

But this *unity* is not *identity*. Each man, however closely associated with others, possesses a distinct and awful individuality. Nothing can deprive him of this. Nothing can absolve him from it. He may be but as a drop in the enormous ocean, yet he is a microcosm of all humanity, with its feelings, its capacities, its responsibilities. This truth, in its subjective form, involves the duties of the individual to the republic. These obligations I may express in one word, by saying, that *he is bound, under all circumstances, to be true to himself—to his individuality.* But this maxim needs to be qualified. A practical adherence to it is consistent only with the highest or the lowest condition of social life. The barbarian prizes, above all things, his distinct individuality—his personal freedom in the largest sense. No association can completely bind him. He is weary

under the least restraint. Even in the crude organization of the tribe, he cannot bear to become absorbed, and will maintain his identity as a warrior, a councilor, and a man. With much that is noble in his ideas of personal independence, with much that is admirable in the self-possession and restraint which he can exert,—still, he obeys the dictates of his own bosom, urged by headstrong will and brutal passion ; and the selfishness that is an essential ingredient in his nature, will not make the compromise that is necessary to the establishment of a state, or, if it does, is likely to break the compact. Here, then, is individualism, but it is exhibited in such a manner, that society, if it exists at all in connection with it, exists precariously.

But there is an exalted and permanent condition of society,—I call it the highest condition,—which is perfectly accordant with distinct and complete individualism. It is where the *whole man* is developed, and the higher powers of his nature exercise their lawful supremacy, In this case, he acts, not like the barbarian from his *passions* and his *will*, but from *reason* and *conscience*. The one refuting the idea that men are held together merely by a gregarious instinct, shows him the true foundation of social union in those broad principles of human brother-

hood revealed by christianity. The other declares his eternal obligations to the right. He preserves his individualism in accordance with the state, because he is himself a state. He has learned self-government, and he knows both how to rule and to obey. In his own soul is a wide dominion perfectly controlled, perfectly free. There are the sanctions of duty, and the oracle of justice, and the law of love. From thence the institutions of society are projected. In maintaining them, he at the same time maintains his individuality. And this constitution of society is republicanism, the essence of which is not state power vested in an abstract authority, but intellectual and moral power developed in the individual. Which form of society I will not say ought not to exist where there is not this personal subservience to reason and conscience,—but which I do say cannot exist without it.

Have I not rightly concluded, then, that the obligations of the individual to the republic may be condensed into these simple words—that he must be true to his individuality, his *whole* individuality, under all circumstances? Whatever he may do, let him hold fast his loyalty to reason and conscience, and he is, he must be, loyal to the State. There can be no prosperity, nor virtue, nor glory in the

aggregate, when the individual is false to the higher dictates within him. By night, by day, at home, abroad, in the field, the mart, the workshop, the closet, the caucus, the legislative hall, the magistrate's chair, let him remember that wherever he acts, whatever he does, he acts as a complete moral agent, personally, directly responsible to God. Let him remember that he ever represents the State. Let him consider every public transaction in which he is engaged as a private affair, and, to that end, in private affairs, let him, at all hazards, do right. Let a vile deed, to which he has given the least countenance, no matter how remote in its operation from his immediate interests, tingle his cheek with shame, as if he had lost personal credit and respect thereby. Let the maxim that "all is fair in politics" sound as discordant to his ears, as the maxim that "all is fair in religion," "all is fair in trade," "all is fair in any act of intercourse between man and man." Let him remember that no movement is so exclusively public, as to take away the force of individual responsibility—that no multitude is so large as to absorb his moral personality—but there, in that public movement, there in that huge crowd, he stands as if he were standing alone in the universe, spiritually naked, listening to the judgment of God, and the beating of his own heart.

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that this strict individualism—this loyalty to the personal reason and conscience—does not conflict with obedience to any civil law. So far as the law is just, in maintaining it we support the dictates of our own better nature. But if it is wrong, shall I obey it? If it presses upon an absolute right of mine, shall I surrender that right? If it violates conscience, shall I sacrifice conscience even here? I reply, that there are other questions which also come under the jurisdiction of conscience, and while *moral* resistance is allowable to all, we are bound to consider the consequences that would result from *physical* resistance to or absolute infringement of the law, and to compromise the greater evil for the less. But, in a well-ordered State, the wilful oppression of an individual is not supposable—when it exists, it must co-exist with other evils, affecting not one alone, but many, and then the question of resistance involves the question of a revolution.

But another question, of more immediate interest, arises here. How shall the individual conduct as a member of a political party? Parties, and party politics! I am well aware that these are stereotyped themes for declamation. And perhaps the abuses of these have been so much dilated upon, that we have

overlooked their great and undeniable uses. With the idea of politics we are apt to connect the notion of something mean and unhallowed—something that stirs the worst passions, involves the most selfish ends, and destroys all moral principle. But let not these abuses, which unquestionably exist, and exist to a wide and lamentable extent, hide the fact that politics, in their legitimate function, are a noble public concern, involving the greatest questions, exercising the profoundest talent, and often securing the most vital good. And parties too have their uses. They are legitimate and necessary organizations. Over the government they exercise, even from selfish motives, that careful vigilance which is one of the essential safeguards of freedom. They promote the discussion of great questions, and, in the strife of emulation, if not of patriotism, achieve much that is for the common welfare.

Parties are the offspring of popular government and free thought. They emanate from that very individualism to which I have directed your attention. Every man, in proportion as his individual good is connected with the welfare of the state,—and precisely in degree as the state is a popular institution, his interests must be thus related to it,—every man, in that case, must feel called upon to act



as a politician. There are, doubtless, some questions upon which he will exercise his suffrages that are not properly party questions, and upon which there will be an almost unanimous decision. But in a very little time, so long as governments are imperfect and thought is active, certain questions will be raised which, absorbing minor opinions, will divide the members of a commonwealth upon their merits, and thence will grow out party union, the nucleus of which will be opposition to, or support of, the point at issue. It will be observed, that I am speaking of *legitimate* parties. I say that the first idea of a legitimate party is, that it is based upon some great *principle*,—that it maintains some vital interest. Parties that are not thus organized,—that have no central idea which consolidates them,—have no reason and therefore no right to exist. When their end is only the election of this or that man,—when the struggle is merely one of party strength,—then the true objects of party are overlooked, they are illegitimate, they are factions.

But a legitimate party comprehends another idea. I said, but now, that it absorbs minor opinions. In his unrestricted exercise of thought, the individual, it is probable, would not think or act with any body else in all respects. But individualism, so far as it is

an exercise of private will, cannot control the state. This fact suggests associated political action,—the combination of numbers capable of producing an influence. But in order to secure unity of action, it is necessary that some common object should be acted for. If each man will have all his favorite measures advanced at once, then the alliance is, of necessity, dissolved. Plainly, there must be compromise. Some measure must be selected which represents the idea of the whole, and thus, uniting all, its success is rendered practicable. The second idea, then, that belongs to a legitimate party, is that of *compromise*,—the waiving of minor and individual opinions for some great concern that represents a common opinion. But in this there is no sacrifice of individualism. There is an individual interest involved in that party measure, though *all* the interests of the individual are not comprised in it. But these are not sacrificed, they are only waived.

Parties then are, first,—matters of *principle*,—second, matters of *compromise*. The one pre-supposes loyalty to the individual reason and conscience, from the very fact that it is a principle; and the other is compromise not *of* principle but *for* principle. In the waiving of minor, and, perhaps, at present impracticable interests, for the purpose of securing

one thus rendered practicable, of course no violation of the moral sense is demanded. Conscientiously connected with such a party, a man is bound to be a party man, and to strain every nerve for the constitutional triumph of party measures.

But the very measures that would render a man false to his individuality, disloyal to reason and conscience, render a party illegitimate, and of course absolve him from connection with it. This occurs when an undue interference with private opinions is exercised,—when a man is expected to cast all his thoughts in one mould, and is branded with traitorous epithets, and ostracised when he expresses his honest convictions respecting certain measures. It occurs when the individual is called upon to act with his party through all issues,—*contrary* to his own opinion. It occurs when the maxim that ‘the end justifies the means,’ is practically carried out,—when *every* question, however foreign to the objects of a party, is made a party question,—when the party life is not the impulse of vigorous patriotism, but the fermenting zeal of headstrong demagogues,—when the laws it frames are party-laws, and all the advantages it gains are grasped for mean and selfish ends,—to aggrandize personal ambition, and feed those who whine for the very offal of office. Then the time

has come when, if a man will be true to his individuality, he must abandon his party or that party must be winnowed. Then it is an illegitimate party. It has lost its central idea. It is tyrannizing over independent interests,—it is demanding a compromise too great, and too vital; and, if it cannot exist without these abuses, let it disband,—let it shiver to pieces,—let good men come out of it, and represent their principle in some other form, and let the bad kennel as quick as may be. ‘How,’ it may be asked, ‘do you say, that because these evils exist, a man must abandon what is good in his party?—or shall he give up that organization which alone can secure the good?’ I answer, that the good and the true do not need the aid of the false and the vile. And, to waive all nice casuistry upon the subject, I say that through no influence, by no connivance, may one falsify his convictions and violate his moral sense. When it comes to that, there opens a higher than any human tribunal,—there start up mightier interests than those of party,—and it becomes a question between the individual and his God.

I shall not stop to apply these truths to any party. But allow me to say, that while it is probable that either of the great parties that agitate the country is better than its rival may suppose,—whether, in both,

there are not some elements which, if they continue and extend, will demand their dissolution, is a subject upon which the honest mind may well reflect.

Thus do I argue for the maintenance, under all circumstances, of a distinct and prominent individualism. Behind this great interest that we call the Republic—behind all laws, all institutions, all achievements—stands the individual MAN. Associations are valuable as they promote his improvement—in him associations have their source. Reforms are only complete in his reformation—from him reforms emanate. Not nations, not armies, have advanced the race ; but here and there, in the course of ages, an individual has stood up and cast his shadow over the world.

It is because I yet have confidence in the vitality of moral principle in individual bosoms among us, that I cannot join with gloomy alarmists. I doubt the pertinency of the common remark—“ We have fallen upon evil times.” If we look back in history, we shall find that, in substance, it has been repeated for many hundred years ; and yet the race has not deteriorated. Reason to be humble, to be vigilant, to be prayerful, indeed we have. I do not deny—no one can deny—that as a nation we have sinned, deeply sinned, and are corrupt. We are to consider

these dark realities ; but for what are we to consider them ? To despond, or to forbode ? No : but to address ourselves to the work of individual reformation. Moreover, if we take everything into the account—the perilous origin, the rapid growth of our country—the accidents and delays that must attend the gradual development of institutions like ours—the liabilities and probabilities to which all human enterprises are exposed—have we not reason to be thankful for the past, and hopeful for the future ? Yes, *hopeful*. I cannot believe that our national dissolution is near. I see too clearly, in its early history, the tokens of a designing Providence. I cannot think that all those stupendous miracles—for we can hardly call them less—that brightened around its discovery and its colonization, indicated the birth of an empire that is to perish in a day. I cannot believe that as literature, the reformation and the press, burst with their light upon the world, and true men had become tired and sick of the mean oppressions and worn-out formalities of Europe, and saw these shores outstretched to welcome them, and heard these primeval forests shouting plainly—“ Here is a theatre for those new elements—Here is a sphere for human freedom and progress ; ” I cannot believe that the promise was all delusive. I reason from

analogy. Great causes do not produce such poor and abortive effects. But however this may be, and let others prophecy what they will, we, of all men, should not despond. We should not re-echo the half gloomy, half exultant speculations of foreigners. We have no business to despair. It is emphatically the thing we should not do. It is one way to create the very evils that we fear. Our duty is to stand here and work—to preach courage, and effort, and hopefulness. The means of reformation are with every man. Let no one despair so long as he has power over his own soul! Let the idea go abroad that he does the best work for his country, who secures his own intellectual and moral exaltation. By firesides, in workshops, in fields of toil, let it be felt that they alone do not serve their country who sit in its executive chairs, who contrive in its cabinets, who debate in its legislative halls; but every man who is true to his reason and his conscience, whatever may be his sphere of labor. Let him feel that the best distinction is honest manhood, and that the proudest title the state can bestow, is that of CITIZEN. And let any who, born among us, may go out from us to expose our weakness, to raise the sneer at our expense on foreign lips, remember that the sentiment of nationality, the love of country, the

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spirit that cherishes its birth-place, is holy ; near akin to that filial affection which proudly hides from others the faults itself perceives. Let them remember him who babbled of the nakedness of Noah, and staggered under the curse of Canaan !

I have not spoken thus to gratify national pride, or to lull into a specious confidence ; but to awaken, through the sentiment of patriotism, each man to that individual action, which is so intimately connected with the interests of the republic. A good or an evil influence upon those interests he must exert. “ For whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.”

But while I have thus endeavored to shew the relation of all to each of each to all, my work cannot be completed without considering that which reveals and sustains these relations. I beseech you, receive not my communication upon this point as a dull form,—as a matter of course,—but as a conclusion to which our argument has irresistibly led us. I have spoken of individual responsibility, of individual influence. Upon these I have rested the welfare of the state,—but upon what do these themselves rest ? Back of all individual conceptions of duty, back of all personal morality, lies the great Law of God and

Rule of Life exhibited by Jesus Christ. That religion, so simple, so spiritual, so mighty,—that urges its requirements upon us in every circumstance,—that extends its aid in every emergency,—that penetrates beneath all outward acts to the motive, and estimates and judges that! If I have placed it last, it is because its influence is so obvious, it is because we have followed the stream up to its fountain-head. Ineffectual indeed will be the humble words that I have spoken, if that oracle is not in your hearts, or if it is unheeded. Upon this new year, here at the threshold of active political duties, I say, and I say it from sincere conviction,—perilous is the course of the man who goes out amid the temptations of public life, without prayerfulness, without a sense of duty caught from communion with Christ. If in his own heart he has separated his politics from his religion, I know not from what else he may divorce them. For from that religion alone does patriotism derive its nerve, and virtue its life.

And now to your Excellency I sincerely tender the salutations that belong to the occasion. No one needs more to be true to his individuality than he who fills the chair of the executive. No one needs more the consolations of such conduct. Peculiar

trials, peculiar temptations are his. The mark of political opponents, he suffers equally, perhaps, from the injudiciousness of political friends. His good deeds men are apt to overlook. His well-meant measures are often misjudged. Borne up upon the waves of party, he must share in their fluctuations. It is then that he must look for recompense for long and good services to the state, such as you have rendered, to his own bosom. It has been your proud distinction to fill offices of the highest trust and honor, and, I doubt not, the truths which I have this day uttered, have long since commended themselves to your mind, and you have experienced the satisfaction which flows from obedience to conviction and duty. In whatever sphere you may be called upon to act, you will look for your highest reward, not from outward honors, but from the approval of conscience and of God.

To his Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, to the Executive Council, to the members of both branches of the Legislature, I would respectfully offer congratulations and good wishes. Gentlemen, go forth to the work to which you may be called, and whether in the seats of council, the halls of legislation, or the no less honorable duties of private life, remember that you ever belong to the state, and the state to

you. Feel that its interests are all your own. And yet, remember, that in serving it, the greatest result still is not in what you do, but in what you are. Remember that intimate personal responsibility to which, under all circumstances, you will be held by God. And permit me to close with these memorable words of Collard, “ Human societies are born, live, and die, upon the earth ; there they accomplish their destinies. But they contain not the whole man. After his engagements to society, there still remains in him the more noble part of his nature ; those high faculties by which he elevates himself to God, to a future life, and to the unknown blessings of the invisible world. We, individuals, each with a separate and distinct existence, with an identical person,—we, truly beings endowed with immortality,—we have a higher destiny than that of states.”



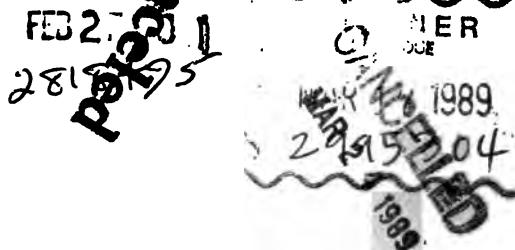


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